

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 479. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1853.

PRICE 1½d.

OUR STREET.

OUR street is as pretty a row of houses as one could wish to look upon. It is not very long. There are only twenty-one houses in it altogether, with three unoccupied spaces in which houses could be built, so that if finished, which it may possibly be in a century hence, it will comprise exactly two dozen dwellings—a neat round number, neither too large nor too small; and, all things considered, a very proper allowance for a quiet and respectable street.

This nice little row of buildings has the advantage of being situated, with a south-western exposure, towards the outskirts of the town, just beyond two very gay and aristocratic crescents, with which it may be said to claim a kind of relationship; for, be it known, it is always a great thing for a small unobtrusive street to be next-door neighbour to a large square, crescent, or place, from which it may enjoy a certain borrowed lustre. At the same time, it is proper to state, that there is little intercourse between our street and the two crescents round the corner. We have sufficient *amour propre* not to be envious or intrusive. We meekly know our position; but if any one were to draw injurious comparisons, I am not quite sure that we could not say something which might induce a very respectful consideration of our circumstances. The truth is, we are not altogether what we seem. We have among us a judge, three landed proprietors, six gentlemen living on their means—one of them being the second-cousin of an earl—a beneficed clergyman, a retired major, and a lawyer in high practice. I find, also, that three of us keep a carriage, two have droskies, and I rather fancy there is a gig somewhere about the further extremity of the row—all points of importance in estimating the social position of a street.

But whatever we are, or whatever may be our circumstances, it cannot be said that we trouble the world with our affairs. Everything about our street is done quietly. You hear no slamming of doors, no racketing at improper hours, no boisterousness. Nobody has ever a single word of complaint with a neighbour. We are a pattern of peace and orderliness. I am quite sure the police have a good bargain of our street. For all the rates we are constantly paying, never, from one year's end to the other, does anything occur to give trouble to the public authorities. If all the world were as well-behaved as our street, there would be no need for government at all.

It might be supposed that the peaceful character which distinguishes our street arises from some kind of general pre-arrangement; but, in reality, we have no *esprit de corps*. What is very strange, the residents do

not know each other intimately enough to be even on speaking-terms. We can tell who is who, and that is nearly all. A nod or bow is considered quite a stretch. We never send to inquire after each other, nor do we take any interest in either the joys or sorrows of our neighbours. A remark among us may go as far as that Number Nineteen has just been married, or that Number Five has had a funeral; and there the subject rests. Unless for the newspapers, we should scarcely know that births, marriages, or deaths took place amongst us. It must be owned, indeed, that we have few births. Our street, altogether, has not perhaps above eight or ten children, and these seem out of place. Children, in fact, would greatly derange our domestic economy. We should not very well know what to do with them, if they made their appearance. The houses are not cut out for nurseries. On the street-floor are the dining-room and back-parlour; the floor next above is all drawing-room, front and back; and then comes the uppermost floor, with but two bed-rooms, and dressing-closet. Such being the whole house, it is evident that children would come very awkwardly in our street; and unless they were huddled into the kitchen or cellars, I am quite at a loss to say where they could be put. No doubt, a regard for these circumstances has its due weight with the inhabitants. If they thought of becoming family-people, they would have to go elsewhere.

Nature is said to be full of compensations. If you have not one thing, you have another. So is it with our street. Its want of children by no means relieves it from certain annoyances incidental to a full complement of infants. When I have said there is a back street in the vicinity, perhaps I have said enough. This back street, as one stream falls into another, has its embouchure in the centre of our row, and thence sends us a flood of youngsters, who spread themselves abroad on the pavement, burrow on the steps of doorways, and play at hide-and-seek in the areas. These invasions of course vastly discompose the dignified tranquillity of our street, and on occasions stir it up to something like passion. As vain was it for the Romans to expel or buy off the invading Huns from their dominions, as it is for our street to attempt to rid itself of the armies of juveniles from the teeming population in the rear. There, morning and evening, in the bright sunshine and under the lamps, is seen and heard this everlasting pest. The more you tap at the window and shake your head, as if menacing some species of contagion, the more they won't go. At length, you really rush out in a frantic sort of way—when, lo! they are off—fled round the corner, or hovering like a cloud in the distance, ready to pour down when your back is

turned. Where the myriads of Gothic tribes came from, was a great mystery to the Romans; and we confess it equally puzzles us to say where these bands of children have their habitat. Out of the back street they come; that is true. But it is as unaccountable as M. Robin's collecting a feather-bed out of a hat, how such flocks of youngsters, joyous, robust, and ragged, can find space in the small and mean dwellings whence they issue, Tatar-like, to disturb the repose of the neighbourhood.

In other respects, the back street is somewhat of a plague. If there be any uproar, it is in the back street. If crackers and toy-cannons startle us by early dawn on the mornings of Queen's birthdays, it is the back street which does it. And then such a continued bawling of articles for sale! Having apparently a fancy for buying everything in sixpenceworths, and, if possible, from peripatetic venders, the back street is beset with grimy men in corduroy jackets, driving carts full of tall black bags, and yelling forth the word 'coal!' with a tremendous expenditure of lungs. These, and other noises in the back street, have a certain horological value. Exactly at four o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, a cart enters the street, and deposits a load of vegetables at the door of the green-grocer. At seven, the children are turned out. At eight, coal begins, and lasts till eleven, when fish takes its place—none of the changes bringing any perceptible alleviation of the clamour.

In our own street, likewise, we can tell the hours by various events and sounds occurring in the course of the day. The first movement which attracts attention at the parlour-window, is the roll of the doctor's carriage, which indicates ten o'clock. The carriage sometimes stops at one door, and sometimes at another; for seldom are we without an illness in the street. As frequently, however, it is observed that the carriage makes calls, day after day for months, at a particular house. 'Ah, there goes Dr So-and-so's carriage again to Number Twelve; I wonder who is ill there.' Such may be the observation made as we are brushing our hat to go out about ten o'clock. Next day, one, two, three carriages are all at the door at once. 'Things must be growing worse at Number Twelve,' it is now remarked. 'There is evidently a consultation—have you heard what is the matter?' Cannot tell. On the following day at ten, no carriages—the blinds are down as we pass. Then we know that something sad has taken place with poor Number Twelve. 'Well, they were quiet neighbours!' And that is all the elegy people get who die in our street.

To go on with the chronology of the day. Our street, with an unfortunate reputation for benevolence, is a favourite field of operations for all sorts of musical and oratorical appeals to a tender-hearted public. The campaign usually opens with an organ, which enters the street at twenty minutes to ten. It commences with the 'Swiss Boy,' works through 'Der Freischütz' as it passes Number Thirteen, and rounds the corner with 'All is Lost,' from *Somnambula*. As it quits our street, there enters a hurdy-gurdy, which seems to have been lying in wait to debouch upon us as soon as the ground was clear. This new candidate cannot be said to have any particular tune, nor does it depend altogether on its musical attractions. To draw coppers from the windows, it is assisted by a dog and monkey. The monkey is a poor little bear-eyed thing, dressed

in a red coat and yellow trousers, and his duty is to act the part of a cavalry officer, the dog of course being his horse. That dog, in our opinion, has a sorrowful life of it, with never a bit of comfort or a word of sympathy for his wrongs. Seated on his back, the monkey fastens his hand in the long ears, or, what is worse, inserts his fingers into the dog's nose, to which he holds fast as a bridle. To all these and other indignities the dog is bound to submit, and he does so, with a surprising degree of patience. As he looks with subdued countenance towards the parlour-windows, knowing apparently that there are the spectators of his sufferings, he says as plainly as words could speak it: 'You see my forlorn fate; existence has no charms for the poor dog, degraded from his sphere to be the horse of a monkey; I was born to be victimised; my only hope is in the kind shelter of the tomb.' On a late occasion, one of Number Fourteen's children kindly gave a mouthful of gingerbread to the poor dog, which he ate with a relish corresponding to the rarity of such dainties. We blessed that little child.

About the time the cavalcade of hurdy-gurdy, dog, and monkey have disappeared, it is getting towards one o'clock, the high noon of musicians. The air of our street is now full of sounds. A blind violin-player has taken possession of one crescent, and a brass band of Germans, with green caps and dirty faces, are playing away at a terrible rate in the other. Over the general hum at length is heard the opening squeak of Punch, who has set up his opera-tent opposite the windows of Number Four; and begun to collect a crowd of urchins from the back street, always ready to furnish an audience at a moment's notice. The performances of Punch, and a visit from a decrepit old man playing in a doleful peepy way on the Irish bagpipe, bring us to four o'clock; after which we are favoured with a serenade from a nondescript foreigner, in a blouse and glazed hat, known among us by the name of Mozart. Mozart has a method of playing on the violin peculiarly his own. He produces no distinct tune, being above that. His airs may be described as a species of voluntary, gently-touched, and with many pauses to screw up the pegs and finger the strings of his instrument, as if to indicate what a wonderfully fine overture he could astonish the world with, if it were worth his while to do so. The impression he makes on our street is, that he is a great continental artiste in the fiddling-line, who goes about only for his amusement. Nobody, to be sure, ever heard him put forth his marvellous powers; but how could he be expected to do so in the obscure character he has assumed? There is one pathetic circumstance connected with Mozart's appearances in our street worthy of notice. He is attended by his wife—possibly a countess in disguise—and a troop of children, who, during his tweedling and peg-screwing, sent themselves on the steps of a doorway, and listen with rapt admiration. By the amiable—though rather robust—partner of his fate, Mozart is doubtless considered the greatest musician that ever appeared on the face of the earth. She wonders that he has never been sent for to court; but consoles herself with the reflection, that even if asked to play before Majesty, he would consent only on condition of being well paid for the condescension.

Other diurnal sights and sounds could be referred to in connection with our street. Besides the musical,

we co-
class
body i
in the
round
ceive
aimen
appea
clama
are yo
than t
of the
or som
it is a
assiste
beggin
ing ou
why e
nitics
conne
As
in our
are tre
usges
placed
slim i
Her o
about
attach
reache
life at
her ow
a dow
Thirt
punct
but sh
to the
lookin
sionall
by an
these
arrang
from t
ber E
racter
origina
and wi
Finche
man a
air; du
acquai
an ear
experie
any fr
intervi
to his
gravity;
A lo
of cha
justice
nonsen
over by
only b
anythin
thieves
our str
Even a
a back
der, wi
with t
tively
phenom
reside
should
remark
myster

we could describe another and much more imposing class of appeals to a charitable public—alas, a limited body in the community! Somewhere about ten o'clock in the morning, begging-books begin their appointed rounds. Greasy quarto volumes, ruled £ s. d., to receive subscriptions for assuaging all sorts of human ailments, are handed in one after the other by what appears to be a regular body of collectors—not the less clamant from being unauthorised by law. No sooner are you down for half-a-guinea to a Lying-in Hospital, than the other half requires to be placed to the account of the Strangers' Friend, the Refuge for the Destitute, or some other exceedingly useful institution; to which it is as much as your character is worth to refuse assistance. Canning fellows the carriers of these begging-books! Know how to bore you just as sallying out for business, or sitting down to dinner! But why enlarge on this distressing revelation of the infirmities of our social system? Pass we to a few points connected with our street more cheering in their details.

As nearly as can be ascertained, there are five dogs in our street; and the manner in which these animals are treated, throws an instructive light on our domestic usages. At the head of the canine population may be placed Sappho, an Italian greyhound, cream-coloured, slim in figure, and of the most refined deportment. Her owner, one of our lady-neighbours, leads Sappho about for an airing, by means of a small polished chain attached to a collar of red morocco; and a report has reached us, that Sappho has been accustomed to châteaufort life at a country mansion, where she had a maid for her own special toilet. I daresay she considers it quite a downcome to live in our street. Fiddy, Number Thirteen's dog, is a small black spaniel, less stiff and punctilious as regards the recognition of neighbours; but she seems to be confined pretty much in her ranges to the back-garden, where her chief amusement is looking out for cats on the tops of the walls. Occasionally, on very fine days, she is taken long walks by an attendant *bonne*, and generally returns from these excursions carrying a biscuit in her mouth—an arrangement said to be desirable, in order to keep her from taking up with bad company by the way. Number Eleven's dog, Pincher, is of totally different character and aspect. He is a wizened old terrier, originally black and tan, but now gray from years, and with a strange little puckered-up face of his own. Pincher is carefully let out every morning by a footman at half-past nine for a quarter of an hour's fresh air; during this space of time he meets with one or two acquaintances, and all seem glad to see each other in an easy conversable way. As a patriarch of deep experience and gravity, Pincher disdains to recognise any frisky puppy which chances to take part in the interview. On the call of the footman, he trots home to his couch by the fireside with the most edifying gravity.

A love of animals, it may be seen, is one of the points of character in our street. We are, indeed, to do us justice, a simple and kind-hearted people, not given to nonsense, and so orderly, that our parties are invariably over by ten, and lights out by eleven o'clock. It is only by means of the newspapers that our street hears anything of evildoers or popular outrage. The very thieves respect us. No burglary has taken place in our street within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Even so petty a thing as the stealing of a washing from a back-green, is totally unknown among us. No wonder, with this reputation for unharmed innocence, and with the warm, sunny look which the houses respectively exhibit, that an empty dwelling is an unheard-of phenomenon. How, with such a universal desire to reside amongst us, the three aforesaid vacant sites should not be built on, is a circumstance not a little remarkable. The fact, however, is, that there is a mystery about these sites. Some say they are in

Chancery; others speak of the proprietor being abroad, no one knows where; and others again allege, that conditions are imposed, as regards occupancy, which no man in his senses would undertake. Any way, there is a *mystery*; and the mystery serves to give an air of romance to the otherwise explicit and unpoetic character of OUR STREET.

METAMORPHOSES OF AN INGOT.

HAVING given a variety of preliminary gossip concerning money and its makers,* we will in this article notice, not the 'Adventures of a Guinea,' or of any other coin, after it gets into circulation, but the manufacturing history of a coin, until the time of its leaving the Mint.

The bullion, or ingots of gold (we will here confine our attention to this metal), being brought to the Mint, and it having been ascertained that each ingot has been melted by approved refiners in the trade, small pieces are cut from each for the assay-master to test or assay. This assaying is a very delicate chemical process: the metal is placed in very small cupels, or crucibles made of calcined bones; it is exposed to heat in contact with other substances, which absorb the baser metal, and leave the pure gold free; the ratio between the original weight of the metal put into the cupel, and that of the pure gold taken from it, denotes the fineness of the ingot. While this assaying is in progress, the ingots are kept carefully under lock and key; but when the assayer has made his report, they are taken out, and carefully weighed. A calculation is then made, founded on the fineness of the gold and the weight of the ingot, of the exact sterling value of the ingot; a receipt is made out and given to its owner, stating the exact amount of sterling coin to which he is entitled in return for it. Most of the gold sent to the Mint to be coined belongs to the Bank of England; but if it belonged to others, the treatment would be just the same.

The melters then put the ingots into a melting-pot; and the gold, when melted, is cast into bars or plates about ten inches long, seven broad, and somewhat under an inch thick. As the ingots may be of different qualities, the surveyor of the meltings so manages his work, that the resulting mixture may be 'standard gold'—that is, may contain 917 parts of pure gold in 1000 parts of metal. During the casting or pouring, small portions of the liquid metal are taken from different parts of the mass, and are laid aside for the master-assayer to test with rigorous exactness. All being correct, the bars are carefully weighed, and are then handed over to more important personages.

With respect to silver, the *modus operandi* is nearly the same, differing only in details. The ingots are larger, weighing from fifty to sixty pounds, and the quality must be 925 of pure silver in 1000 parts. The gold is melted in a black-lead crucible, in quantity about 100 pounds, which produces two bars; whereas silver is melted in a cast-iron pot, in quantity about 400 pounds at a time. This melting-pot being rather heavy, a pouring-machine of ingenious construction is used to aid in filling the moulds.

Thus we get bars of gold and of silver, which are now ready for other processes. In respect to silver—as the Mint contains eight melting-furnaces, as each will melt 420 pounds at a time, and as three meltings can be effected in a working-day of ten hours, there can be about 10,000 pounds of silver melted in a day into bars; and the subsequent mechanical operations are organised accordingly. The plates are first rolled, to bring them to the required thickness; but they must be heated to enable them to yield to the rolling-mill. There are two furnaces placed

* No. 477. Article, 'Queen's Money-makers.'

opposite two sets of rollers; a man seizes the heated plate with a pair of tongs, and inserts it between two heavy rollers, which greatly compress it. This is done four or five times, until the plate or ingot of silver is reduced to a thickness of about one-fifth of an inch, and is proportionably widened. Gold yields more readily than silver to this process, and does not require heating; the heating of the silver occasions a little discoloration, which requires a little rubbing with a dilute acid or pickle for its removal.

We have now, therefore, broad thin plates of standard metal, which must go through many more processes before the stamping-press comes into action. The plates are cut into narrow strips by a machine somewhat similar in principle to that which cuts sheet-iron, but of course much more delicate and precise in its action, and with a provision to prevent the strips from curling up. The plates are cut breadthwise, and generally into strips of such width as will suffice for two of the coins about to be made.

Still, the plates are too thick for the purpose: they must be further reduced. The two rollers before employed are called 'breaking-down rollers,' and had the harder work to do; but those now employed are case-hardened, or steels at the surface, and are highly polished. The plates are passed cold through these 'planishing rollers.' After once passing, the rolls are brought closer together; after a second transit of the plate between them, they are again approximated; and so on four or five times. As the thickness of the shilling, or sovereign, or other coin, depends on the thickness produced by these rollings, the workmen are exceedingly careful in the process, testing each strip separately by means of a gauge. The rolling-mills were constructed for the Mint by Rennie, and are finished specimens of workmanship. Mr Barton has invented a machine, however, by which this reduction of thickness is attained more successfully. The process is one bearing some analogy to wire-drawing or tube-drawing—the strip of metal being pulled forcibly through an oblong opening left between two surfaces of hardened steel. The strips are made a little thinner at one end, by a very curious and ingenious apparatus. The drawing-bench has at one end the steel dies, and at the other the moving machinery, an endless chain extending from end to end. The die consists of two very small cylinders of hardened and highly-polished steel, adjusted with minute accuracy to the proper distance apart; and each strip is drawn through the opening in this die, by which it is reduced to the proper thickness. When the strips are prepared by Rennie's machine, it is reckoned good work if one pound of blanks cut out from them differs only six grains from absolute correctness, whereas with Barton's machine, the error seldom exceeds three grains.

The blanks just mentioned are the round pieces which are to form the coins; and the cutting out of these is the next process. The cutting-out room is an elegant circular apartment lighted from the roof, and having twelve presses ranged in a circle. These presses are a beautiful contrivance of Boulton's, whose name has been so famously associated with coin-machinery. Each press comprises within its mechanism an air-pump, which is exhausted by every upward movement of the pump; while the vacuum thus created causes the downward movement of the punch. The punch and the die are both of hardened steel, and are of such a size as to exceed by a trifle the diameter of the coin to be made. A boy presents a strip to the action of this machine, and moves it onwards until as many blanks as it can make have been cut from it. Many visitors to the Great Exhibition will remember a machine, in the 'Machinery Department,' by which medals were cut out and stamped in presence of the spectators; the cutting-out machine will give some idea of those employed at the Mint, though the principle is somewhat different.

The strips of metal are thus cut into *blanks* or *planchets* and *scissel*, the latter being the waste. The scissel is made up into parcels, called 'journey-weights,' containing fifteen pounds of gold, or sixty pounds of silver, and is locked up for a time in a strong box; for the moneyers are expected to return, in the forms of coin and scissel, as much metal as was given to them in the form of bars, minus a small recognised allowance for waste. The blanks, after this, are taken to another room, to be accurately adjusted in size and weight. Each individual piece is weighed: if too light, it is sent back to be remelted; if too heavy, it is reduced by filing; but Mr Barton's drawing-engine has rendered any errors of consequence in this respect very rare. Each piece is also rung upon a solid plate of iron, that its sonorous quality may denote the requisite soundness within. All being right so far, the blanks—having been rendered very hard by so much rolling and pressing—require to be annealed or softened; they are placed, 10,000 or 12,000 at a time, in iron cases in an annealing oven, where they are brought to a cherry-red heat, and then very slowly cooled. This annealing always discolours the surface; and to remove the discoloration, the blanks are boiled in dilute sulphuric acid, then washed with cold water, and dried in hot saw-dust.

How different are now the means by which coins are made from those adopted two or three centuries ago! Before the time of Charles II., the slips of gold or silver were hammered to the proper thinness, cut into squares by scissors, and these squares cut into rounds. The blank was placed between two dies, the upper one of which was struck with a hammer, to produce the impression. There was thus no machine at all employed; whereas machines of exquisite construction are now used in every operation. It is obvious that, both in respect to the adjustment of the dies immediately over each other, and in the inequality of the hammer's stroke, there can have been little certitude in the work. One of these old dies was found a few years ago in Westminster Abbey, and is now preserved at the Mint. It is a singular fact, that no essential improvement was made in this primitive mode of minting until about the middle of the sixteenth century, when the power of the screw-press was applied to coining in the French Mint. This method was partially introduced into England in 1561; but the hammer-method was not finally abandoned until 1662. The edges of the hammered money were left in a rude and unfinished state, which rendered them very liable to deterioration by clipping.

The stamping or coining presses are perhaps the most beautiful machines at the Mint; being more automatic or self-acting than any of the others. Each press places its own blank on the proper spot, and removes it again when the stamp has done its work; and this with a precision and accuracy which no human fingers could equal. A youngster sits in a little nook near the lower part of the machine, and drops the metal blanks into a vertical tube; he simply throws in the food, as a horse's food is thrown into the manger, and leaves the machine to shift about, and arrange, and digest, and transform it by its own active energy. The boy has two strings, one of which, when pulled, puts the press in motion; while the other stops it. In about the seventieth part of a minute, the machine turns out a perfected coin, exquisitely stamped on both sides. The blanks form a vertical pile in the tube, the innermost falling and resting on a little sliding platform with circular arms to grasp it. The platform moves, and whips away the lowermost sovereign with it, placing it on the lower die of the stamping apparatus; and in the act of so adjusting this blank, the slider pushes away the former blank which has just been converted into a coin. The slider then runs back, and, opening its circular jaws, seizes

another
it can
the bl
collar,
edge
is the
as to
surface
collar
knock
by an
movem
seven
at the
eight
mintin
This
and n
person
The
When
of the
locked
or ma
unavo
by his
the o
weigh
intrus
remed
exceed
than a
them
the re
remed
in pr
increa
In t
upon
is a c
gold
of fif
sixty
promi
is we
accor
error,
respon
the re
taken
to see
sealed
the fi
author
who l
On
compl
gover
gold
of the
jury
every
delica
ratus,
the te
ment
delive
to the
the p
that
be 'w
coins
or me
true
near
9 oz.

another blank from the bottom of the pile, which it carries off triumphantly to the die. Meanwhile, the blank previously placed becomes embraced by a collar, so engraved on the inside as to give the milled edge to the coin, and is held firm; the upper die is then brought down by screw-power, with such force as to stamp every part of the blank at once—the two surfaces by the two dies, the rim by the collar. The collar then sinks just in time to allow the slider to knock the finished coin off its perch, before replacing it by another blank. All these numerous and exquisite movements are, as we have said, performed in one-seventieth part of a minute, for the coins are stamped at the rate of about seventy per minute. There are eight of these fine machines at work at once when the minting operations are busy.

This description applies equally to both systems, old and new; the recent changes referring rather to the persons than to the processes.

The trial of the *pix* is a singular official formality. When a definite amount of coinage is completed, some of the coins are put into a *pix* or box, and carefully locked. The Master of the Mint is allowed a 'remedy' or margin of deficiency, to cover the slight errors which unavoidably creep into the operations. He is bound, by his engagement with the government, to see that the officers under him return (conjointly) as much weight of coined money as there had been of bullion intrusted to them, with a very small allowance or remedy for waste and inaccuracies. If the quality exceeds or falls short of the required standard by more than a very minute percentage, the master must coin them over again at his own cost; but if all be within the remedy, he obtains his quittance or 'quietus.' The remedy is made smaller and smaller by the government, in proportion as improved scientific methods render increased accuracy attainable.

In the first place, the *pixing* is a check of the master upon his subordinates; and after this the trial of the *pix* is a check of the government upon the master. The gold coins, when made, are packed in journey-weights of fifteen pounds; while the silver coins are packed in sixty pounds-journeys. One pound in tale is taken promiscuously from each bag before tying up; this pound is weighed in a balance of exquisite delicacy; and according as it comes or not within certain limits of error, the moneyers are acquitted or not of further responsibility in respect to that journey-weight. If the result be right (which it generally is) two coins are taken from the pound; one is assayed very rigorously, to see that the standard is proper, while the other is sealed up and locked in the *pix*. When the assay of the first of these two pieces is completed, the assayer authorises the journey-weight to be delivered to those who had sent in the bullion.

On a given day, when a large coinage has been completed, the Master of the Mint applies to the government for a trial of the *pix*. A jury of practical goldsmiths is summoned by the Privy-council, at one of the government offices, and into the hands of this jury is consigned the *pix*, containing one coin from every journey-weight. The jury has also exquisitely delicate weights and scales, and a small assaying apparatus. The jurymen read the indenture, which specifies the terms of the master's engagement with the government; they weigh and assay the coins in the *pix*, and deliver their verdict to the Privy-council. According to this verdict is the master acquitted or not; but the previous assay weighings have been so numerous, that the master is always, or nearly always, found to be 'within the remedy.' On some occasions, the gold coins accumulated in the *pix* have amounted to £8000 or more. At one trial of the *pix*, some years ago, the true and the actual weights of the gold coins were so near each other as the following numbers:—190 lbs., 9 oz., 9 dwts., 15 grs.; 190 lbs., 9 oz., 8 dwts., 0 grs.

The small difference here observable was far within the remedy allowed.

When all this has been done, and the gold, silver, and copper coins have been thrown into circulation, the Mint may be considered to have done its work. Sometimes it works hard. The Mint refiner melted £73,000,000 of gold, and £10,000,000 of silver, between 1837 and 1847. On some extraordinary occasions, such as a panic, or when any great political or commercial crisis arrives, large quantities of coin are required in a short time. So also when old coins are called in. When the great silver-coinage of 1816-17 took place, there was coined at the Mint, between June 5, 1816, and March 4, 1817, no less than 832,020 pounds of silver. There were 3,934,656 half-crowns, 36,127,080 shillings, and 17,899,200 sixpences, making nearly fifty-eight million pieces in all. The value was £2,745,666. The rollers and pressers were at work night and day, by relays, producing about a quarter of a million pieces per day on an average. During the war, subsidies to foreign powers often led to the minting of large quantities of coin in a very short time; and when the Sycee silver was brought from China, in payment of the war indemnity, there was a busy coining of silver. It is probable that these fits and gluts led to the moneyers' privilege, or at anyrate strengthened it; for it was deemed right to have experienced persons at hand, and these experienced persons paid themselves well.

With regard to the extent of the Mint operations in average years, we will take 1847 and 1848. The Mint, in 1847, received about 100,000 pounds of gold, and coined about £5,000,000 in sovereigns and half-sovereigns. The silver received weighed about 21,000 pounds, and was returned in the forms of crowns, half-crowns, shillings, sixpences, groats, and Maundy-money, to the value of £125,000. There were forty tons of copper coined into £9000, in pennies, half-pennies, farthings, and half-farthings. The account for 1848 presented the following weights of metal received: 46,000 pounds gold, 15,000 pounds silver, 10 tons copper; and the following values of coins produced: £2,500,000 gold, £35,000 silver, and £2700 copper. The years after 1848 began to be affected by the gold discoveries, concerning whose influence on the Mint it is yet too early to decide.

There are some curious facts connected with the depreciation of coin by wear. Though we do not see whither the particles go, yet that they go somewhere is indisputable, for our coins certainly become light by rubbing. It has been estimated, from comparing many well-conducted experiments, that a sovereign loses 1-900th of its weight in the first year of its average circulation; that is, that 900 sovereigns become worth only 899. In a shilling, or other silver coin, the loss by wear is still greater; the shilling loses 1-150th, or 150 become worth only 149. This is only a rough attempt to average all the coins; some of them go through more severe work than others, as we well know. The Mint officers found, in 1826, that ten years' wear of a number of sixpences had reduced their value no less than about 4 per cent., or nearly 1 in 25. The Mint, during 1849, took a considerable amount of worn silver coin from the Bank for re-coinage, and on weighing it the silver was found to be so worn, that while the nominal or Bank value was £135,000, the Mint value, at 66s. per ounce, was only £122,000.

Mr Miller, weighing-clerk at the Bank of England, weighed 10,000 new sovereigns in 1848, with the view of ascertaining how far they deviated from rigid accuracy. The standard weight of a true sovereign is about 123½ grains, and the *lightest* among the whole 10,000 exceeded 122½ grains, shewing how close was the degree of accuracy. If a sovereign falls short of 122½ grains, it is not considered current, but is pronounced 'light,' and is treated accordingly at the Bank. Between 1844 and

1848, about 48,000,000 sovereigns and half-sovereigns were weighed at the Bank by Mr Cotton's beautiful gold-weighing machine. So accurate is this machine, that a minute fraction of a grain in the weight of a sovereign can easily be detected by it. Out of each 10,000 sovereigns, more than 5600 were correct within one-tenth of a grain. This of course does not relate to the wear of coins, but to their extreme accuracy when quite new.

AND THEN?

THE oracle of the beautiful sequestered little hamlet of Ambermead, was an old gentleman of unobtrusive and orderly habits, whose peculiar taciturnity had obtained for him the familiar cognomen of Two Words. Mr Canute, *alias* Two Words, dwelt on the outskirts of the village, tended by an ancient housekeeper, almost as chary of speech as her worthy master. It was surmised that Mr Canute had seen better days; but though his means were straitened, his heart was large, and his countenance expressed great benevolence. Notwithstanding the brief mode of speech which characterised him on all occasions, the advice of Mr Canute was eagerly sought on every subject whereon it was presumed advice could be profitable; and the simple rustics of Ambermead perhaps valued it the more, because, though delivered without a particle of pomposity, the terseness and decision of the words expended, left an indelible impression, which long sermons often failed to convey. Mr Canute lived on terms of intimacy with the family at the old Hall—an intimacy cemented by early association, for Mr Harwell and Mr Canute had been school-fellows; and when a painful and lingering illness attacked the squire, his ancient friend and crony felt deep anxiety as to the ultimate fate of Mr Harwell's only child, the good and lovely Clara Harwell. The disease was an incurable one; though the suffering might be protracted, there was no hope of ultimate recovery, and an air of gloom reigned over the village of Ambermead, where once the sweet spring and summer tide brought only sport and glee. Ambermead was noted for a profusion of rich red roses, exhaling delicious fragrance; and for the song of innumerable nightingales, whose harmonious concerts resounded amid the umbrageous groves, sheltering the hamlet on every side, and extending beyond the old Hall of Ambermead. But now, although the roses bloomed and the birds sang, serious faces looked from the cottage doors; and while the younger villagers forgot their usual pastimes, the elders conversed apart in whispers, always directing their glances towards the Hall, as if the sufferer within those thick walls could be disturbed by their conversation. This sympathy was called forth, not only by the circumstance of Mr Harwell being their ancestral landlord, the last of an impoverished race, but from his always having lived among them as a friend and neighbour—respected as a superior, and beloved as an equal. Their knowledge also of the squire's decayed fortunes; and that, on his death, the fine old place must become the property of a stranger, whom rumour did not report favourably of—greatly enhanced the concern of these hereditary cultivators of the soil; and many bright eyes grew dim thinking of poor Miss Clara, who would so soon be fatherless, and almost penniless. The estate of Ambermead was strictly entailed in the male line, and the next heir was of distant kin to the Harwells. A combination of misfortunes, and no doubt of imprudence in years long by-gone, had reduced the present proprietor to the verge of ruin, from which he was to find refuge only in the grave. The Harwell family had lived for centuries in Ambermead. They seemed so much to belong to their poor neighbourhood, who always sympathised most fully in all the

joys and sorrows of the 'Hall folk,' that now, when there was a certain prospect of losing them for ever as it seemed, the parting became more than a common one between landlord and tenant, between rich and poor—it was the parting of endeared friends.

They watched and waited for Mr Canute passing to and fro, as he did every day, and more than once a day; and on his two words they hung, as if life or death were involved in that short bulletin.

'How is the squire to-day?' said one.

'No better,' replied Mr Canute mildly, without stopping.

'And how's Miss Clara?' inquired another with deep pity in his looks.

'Very patient,' responded the old man, still moving slowly on with the aid of his stout staff.

'Patient!' repeated several voices when he was out of hearing. 'Yes, yes, patient enough; and Master Canute means a deal when he says patient. Bless her young sweet face! there's patience in it if ever there was in mortal's.'

Mr Canute's patience was sorely taxed by questioning at all hours; he was waylaid first by one, then by another, on his way from his own cottage to the Hall, but with unflinching good-nature and promptitude, he invariably satisfied the affectionate solicitude of his humble neighbours—in his own quaint way, certainly—never wasting words, yet perfectly understood.

The summer-tide was waning into autumn, and the squire of Ambermead faded more gradually than autumn leaves, when late one evening a wayfarer stopped at Mr Canute's cottage, which was on the roadside, and requested permission to rest, asking for a draught of water from the well before the porch.

'Most welcome,' said Two Words, scanning the stranger, and pleased with his appearance, for youth and an agreeable countenance are sure passports; perhaps, too, Mr Canute discerned gentle breeding in his guest, despite travel-soiled habiliments, and a dash of habitual recklessness in his air. At anyrate, the welcome was heartily given, and as heartily responded to; and when Mr Canute left his dwelling, in order to pay his usual evening visit at the Hall, he merely said, addressing his young visitor: 'Soon back;' and turning to Martha, the careful housekeeper, added: 'Get supper;' while on stepping over the threshold, second thoughts urged him to return and say to the young man: 'Don't go.'

'No, that I won't,' replied he frankly, 'for I like my quarters too well. I'll wait till you come back, governor; and I hope you won't be long, for my mouth waters for the supper you spoke of.'

Mr Canute smiled, and walked away more briskly than usual; and after sitting for some time beside the sick man's bed, and bidding 'good-night' and 'bless you' to sweet Clara Harwell, he retraced his steps homewards, and found supper ready, and the handsome stranger so obviously ready to do justice to the frugal fare, that Mr Canute jocularly remarked: 'Keen air;' to which the stranger replied in the same strain: 'Fine scenery;' on which the host added: 'An artist?' when the youth, laughing outright, said: 'An indifferent one indeed.' After a pause, and suffering his mirth to subside, he continued: 'Are you always so economical in words, sir? Don't you sometimes find it difficult to carry on conversation in this strain?'

'You don't,' replied Mr Canute smiling, and imperceptibly good-natured.

'Not I,' cried the youth; 'and I want to ask you half a hundred questions. Will you answer me?'

'I'll try,' replied Mr Canute.

'I've not long to stay, for I'm on a walking tour with a friend; but I diverged to Ambermead, as I was anxious to see it. I've had a curiosity to see it for a long while; but my friend is waiting for me at the market-town, eight miles off, I think, and I shall strike

across the country when the moon is up, if you'll give me a rest till then.'

'Most welcome,' said Mr Canute courteously.

'Ah ha!' quoth the stranger, 'if that's the way you pursue your discourse, I don't think I shall learn much from you. I hope, however, that I may get a wife who will follow your example—a woman of two words, in short; she'll be a rare specimen of her sex!'

'Ah ha!' ejaculated Mr Canute.

'But come, tell me, for time presses,' said the young man, suddenly becoming grave—'tell me all about Ambermead, and the squire—how long he's likely to last. For, in fact, the friend I mentioned, who is with me during this walking tour, is vastly interested in all that concerns the place and property.'

'The heir?' whispered Mr Canute mysteriously.

'Well, well, suppose we say he is; he's not altogether a bad fellow, though he is considered a bit reckless and wild. But he has heard of Clara Harwell's beauty and goodness from his cousin, Lady Ponsonby (she's Clara's cousin too, you know); and he is really quite sorry to think that such a lovely creature should be turned out of the old Hall to make room for him. He wants to know what will become of her when old Harwell dies, for all the world knows he's ruined. It's a pretty place this old Ambermead—a paradise, I should say. I know what I'd do, if I was ever lucky enough to call it mine.' The youth rubbed his hands gleefully. 'I should be a happy dog then!'

'And then?' said Mr Canute smiling.

'Why, then, I'd pull down the rickety old house up there, and build a palace fit for a prince; I'd keep nothing but the old wine; I'd have lots of prime fellows to stay with me; and I should sport the finest horses and dogs in the country.' The speaker paused, out of breath.

'And then?' said Mr Canute quietly.

'Why, then, I'd hunt, and shoot, and ride, and drink, and smoke, and dance, and keep open house, and enjoy life to the full—feasting from year's end to year's end—the feast of reason and the flow of soul, you know, in old Ambermead!'

'And then?'

'Why, then, I suppose that in time I should grow old, like other people, and cease to care for all these things, so much as I did when strength and youth were mine.'

'And then?' said Mr Canute more slowly.

'Why, then—and the stranger hesitated—'then, I suppose, like other people, in the course of nature, I should have to leave all the pleasures of this life, and, like other people—die.'

'And then?' said Mr Canute, fixing his eyes, glittering like diamonds, on the young man's face, which flushed up, as he exclaimed with some irritation:

'Oh, hang your "and thens!" But the moon is well up, I see, so I'm off. Good-night, and thank you.' And without further parley, he started off on his walk over the hills; and Mr Canute silently watched his guest's retreating figure till, in the deep shadows of the surrounding groves, he was lost to view. In the moonlight, in the darkness, in the valley, and on the hillside, these words haunted the wayfarer, and he kept repeating to himself, 'And then?' Thoughts took possession of his mind that never before had gained entrance there, or at least they arranged themselves in a sequence which gave them quite a new significance. His past life presented itself to him for the first time as a coherent chain of events, exemplifying cause and effect; and if his plans for the future did not at that moment receive any determinate change, he still kept repeating, anxiously and inquiringly, as he wandered on in the moonlight, the two strangely-suggestive words: 'And then?' It proved a long and a toilsome night's journey for that belated traveller; for he had left Mr Canute's cottage so hastily, that he had omitted to ask for certain landmarks on the hills

leading to the place whither he was bound. In consequence, the stars faded in the sky, and the rosy morn broke through the eastern mists, ere the weary man, from the summit of a high hill which he had tortuously ascended, beheld afar off, down in the valley, the shining river, the bridge, and the church-tower of the town where his friend, in some anxiety, awaited his reappearance.

During all his after-life, that young man never forgot the solitary night-walk when he lost his way beneath a beautiful spangled summer sky: the stars seemed to form the letters, 'And then?' the soft night-breeze seemed to whisper in his ear: 'And then?'

It is true, he had not gained the intelligence he sought respecting the inmates of Ambermead Hall; but he had laid bare his own folly for the inspection of Mr Canute; and in return, he had listened to no reproach—no tiresome lecture vouchsafed from proxy age to ardent youth, but simply two words had penetrated his heart, and set him a thinking seriously. Mystic little words! 'And then?'

For nearly three years after Mr Harwell's decease, the old Hall, contrary to general anticipation, remained untenanted, save by domestics left in charge. Miss Clara had found shelter with her relative, Lady Ponsonby, though her memory was still fresh and warmly cherished among the humble friends in her beautiful native village. Mr Canute, if possible, more silent than ever, still remained the village oracle; perhaps more cherished than of yore, inasmuch as he was the only memento remaining of the beloved Harwells—the old familiar faces now seen no more. He would listen, and they would talk, of days gone by; he felt the loss even more than others, for he mourned a companion and friend in Mr Harwell, and Clara had been to the good Two Words as an adopted daughter. At length it was rumoured that Mr Selby, the new proprietor, was soon expected to take possession of his property in due form; moreover, that he was on the point of marriage, and that his young bride would accompany him. Ill reports fly quickly; and it had been circulated in former times that Mr Selby was wild and extravagant, careless of others, selfish and profligate. Indeed, Mr Canute had not contradicted such reports, so it was generally opined they were too true, and had a legal foundation. With heavy hearts, the inhabitants of Ambermead commenced their rural preparations for the reception of the squire and his bride; green arches were erected, and wreaths of flowers were hung on the spreading branches beneath which the travellers' road lay. It was the season of roses and nightingales, when Ambermead was in its glory; and never had the rich red roses bloomed so profusely, and never had the chorus of the groves been more full and enchanting, than on the summer evening when the old and young of the hamlet, arrayed in their holiday attire, waited to greet the new-comers.

Mr Canute stood at his cottage door; the bridge just beyond, over which the route conducted to the Hall through avenues of greenery, was festooned with roses; and a band of maidens in white, lined the picturesque approach. The sun was setting, when a carriage drove quickly up, slackening its pace as it crossed the bridge, and stopping at Mr Canute's humble gate. Two Words himself, bareheaded, stepped forwards on seeing a lady alight, who in another moment threw herself into his arms, exclaiming: 'Our first greeting must be from you, dear, dear Mr Canute! I need not introduce Mr Selby—he is known to you already.' Speechless from astonishment and emotion, the old man could only say: 'Miss Clara!'—as he gazed from one to another, recognising in the gentleman the wayfaring guest who had departed so abruptly on his walking expedition over the moonlight hills, more than three years previously. Seizing the hand which Mr Canute silently extended, Mr Selby said with deep feeling:—

'It is to your instrumentality that I owe my present happiness.'

'How so?' was Mr Canute's reply, looking with pleased surprise into the open face, which, on a former occasion, had won his confidence and admiration.

'Two words spoken in season wrought a change in me, which all the preaching of friends and guardians had failed to effect,' returned Mr Selby, 'and without which Clara never would have blessed me with her hand. These years of probation have proved my sincerity; and Lady Ponsonby (a severe and scrutinising judge) pronounced my reformation complete ere she permitted me to address Clara. Those two little words, "*And then?*" enigmatical to the uninitiated, convey a deep and mystical meaning to my heart; and they are of such significant import, that by inserting them whenever I paint the future, I trust to become a wiser and a better man.'

Clara gazed proudly and confidently on her husband; and the news of her arrival having spread through the village, a crowd collected, whose joy and surprise found vent in tears and blessings, to say nothing of numerous *asides*, purporting that Miss Clara never would have espoused a bad man; ergo, Mr Selby must be a worthy successor of the ancient race!

The prognostication proved correct; and the pathway, strewn with bright summer roses, over which Clara trod in bridal pomp on her way to the ancestral home where she was born, was indeed emblematical of the flowery path which marked her future destiny.

The old Hall of Ambermead is still extant—a fine specimen of venerable decay, surrounded by ancestral groves, still famed for sheltering innumerable nightingales when the Ambermead roses exhale their delicious fragrance. In the old church-yard on the green hill-side, a white monument gleams in the sunshine, whereon may be traced the name of John Canute, specifying the date of his happy death, while below is engraven this inscription of two words—"*And then?*"

GIVE THE FRENCH FAIR PLAY.

It is a curious fact, highly worthy of being kept in mind at the present moment, that, within the last fifteen years, we have had three distinct threats of war with America—the Macedon question, the Maine question, and the Oregon question—and fully as many with France (we really forget all the occasions, but a queen of Tahiti, a Mr Pritchard, and a Spanish princess, were wrought up with them), and yet no actual war ever took place. The affair—to use a phrase which we employed on the same subject in 1848—somehow always 'blew past.' So it is likewise an interesting, and for the present a particularly important fact, that, within the last sixty years, serious threats of invasion have been several times held out by France, but never executed to an extent worthy of notice; while, on the other hand, we have in that time executed two distinct and effective invasions of France, on each occasion helping to change the government of the country. Look further back in English history, and it will be found that, since the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century, the English have, over and over again, invaded and occasionally almost subjugated France, while France has not once invaded England. England has not now the very least wish to trouble France, but chooses to be very apprehensive that France may act towards it the part of the invader. If we were to judge, however, by experience, the latter would appear to be by far the less probable event. And may not the French, on the strength of history, very reasonably, however erroneously, form that conclusion? Even the

most recent series of events may contribute to give plausibility to this idea, for in the commencement of the wars consequent upon the French Revolution, England was virtually the aggressor. On the other hand, the English, remembering how much oftener they have been the invading party, and how unsubstantial all the recent rumours of war with France have proved, might surely lean with tolerable security to the hope that there will not now, without their own will, be any hostile collision with their neighbours across the Channel.

Although the reasonableness of this line of argument may be admitted, it will doubtless be said, that apprehensions in the English mind are almost solely based upon the special character and circumstances of the present ruler of France. Well, the acts by which Louis Napoleon attained supreme power are not defensible on moral grounds; though, in superseding a feeble legislature in circumstances so critical, it may be allowed that he was not without the plea of political necessity—a plea on which every government in Europe has done the harshest and shabbiest things. Besides being unscrupulous, however, he is seen to be astute and cunning to a surprising degree. With such qualities, he is a source of some danger. Of this, with all deference to those who confidently express an opposite opinion, we think there can be no doubt. But it would obviously be a bad way of guarding against this danger, to do that which would make it greater. We should take care that we do not, by our very precautions against invasion, provoke it, or at least lead to that condition of hostility between two countries which the wise and good of both anxiously deprecate.

It is in itself a startling circumstance, that the great war alluded to would have been effectually stopped several times, if England had not set itself to something like an eternal hostility against the rulers whom France had chosen. Objection to treat with these rulers, as was very natural, only roused the spirit of the French to cling to them with the more tenacity: it the more effectively enlisted the affections of the French people against England. It would be something analogous, if we were to carry our antipathy or jealousy respecting the new French emperor to such a pitch as to make his people think him an object of persecution, and rouse their anger against us. Fortunately, there is but little of this spirit amongst us, for, though a man of Louis Napoleon's history could never be respected in England, there is a very general desire to avoid everything that may look like an interference with the evolutions of politics in France. But there might, nevertheless, be a kind of persecution apprehended by our sensitive neighbours, in our being even too loud in the expression of our belief that a hostile movement on the part of the emperor is possible. We should remember, that it is imagining him capable of an act both rash and wicked to an extraordinary degree. No one can doubt that, if he be innocent of the design, the attributing it to him must be highly offensive. Here, then, are evils from a too strong feeling regarding the emperor, which it would be well to guard against.

To imagine of the French themselves, that they are capable of making an unprovoked and stealthy attack upon England, is fraught with danger from the same cause. It is proclaiming our sense of their being capable of acting as robbers and pirates—a tremendous charge to bring against a great people as far advanced in civilisation as ourselves. Surely some candour on this point might be expected of us. If conscious on our own part that we are incapable of making an unprovoked assault upon France, is it generous to suppose such a thing of our neighbours? It may be said: But the French have a defeat to reverse and revenge. That is, we assume that they are capable, as a nation, of acting on one of the lowest and most barbarous of the human passions, and that after a lapse of forty

years, during which, for one demonstration of lurking ill-will, there have been ten of good-feeling. We must assert, that the whole statement of the case is one disproof of there being any general feeling in France against England. The former country was most decidedly wronged by us, as by several other states, in 1792-3, and yet the war terminated in a triumph in which we participated. To say the least, the French people had reason to feel sore respecting that series of transactions; yet they have put up with their sensations peaceably, till all the active people of that period are off the field. Is it logical to suppose that what the wounded generation submitted to, the unwounded will avenge? After so long a period of forbearance, and so many occasions for war blowing over good-humouredly, it is surely most unreasonable to suppose, that there can be any great tendency to it now. No, the French, we would rather say, have proved that, like most injured parties, they have been more capable than the injurer of forgetting the injustice.

We have admitted that, with so extraordinary a politician as Louis Napoleon to deal with, a sudden war is not to be regarded as an impossibility; but certainly it is necessary to use great discretion in acting upon such a belief. No one amongst us ever seems to put himself into the French point of view regarding these questions of additional defences. But, undoubtedly, the French, having no more reason to trust in our innocence of hostile designs than we in theirs, might well be startled if they heard of batches of new war-ships and large levies of fresh troops on our side. It might appear to them only a cunning device of ours to represent it all as precautionary, when we, in reality, meant it to be aggressive. What assurance can we give them against this, or how can we prevent them increasing their own armaments in consequence, thus doubling and making a reality of that menace which we originally only assumed? In fact, there is no end to these armings from mutual suspiciousness, till the resources of the respective countries be crippled or worn out—the natural termination of a silent as of an active war.

It is possible, we would hope, to dissent from a good deal that the more conspicuous advocates of peace say upon this subject—such as that there is no real popular alarm, but only a club-outcry for more soldiering, and that even the present armaments are more than is required for the protection of this many-provoked empire—and yet be sensible that any danger there really is from our French neighbours is liable to be increased by the very efforts we make to meet and repel it. It seems to us that a negative and watchful policy is not merely all that is required to meet so problematical a peril, but the most likely to preserve peace. We would, for our part, go further, and take means to let the French know, that we appreciated the forbearance which they have shewn since the conclusion of the last war, and desired nothing more than that the past should be forgotten, trusting that, with continued peace, the two peoples must advance in prosperity, and prove more and more serviceable to each other in the walks of their respective industries. But we suppose this will be regarded as something a little too Quixotic for the present day, and therefore we pass from it. Much, however, will be done if, in a silent appreciation of the fraternal feelings of our French neighbours, we learn a reason for looking upon them with faith instead of distrust. In common life, we all know how much mischief is sometimes done by meddling persons busying themselves with other people's affairs. So may great national disasters spring from the continual talk, in which certain newspapers unhappily indulge, about invasion as a thing certain to come. Acquitting these papers of anything like selfishness in trying to foment distrust and increase armaments, we

cannot but deprecate, if not their suspicions, at least the offensive manner in which these suspicions are expressed. Greatly is it to be desired that this 'talk of war' were put an end to, by some distinct public act calculated to tranquillise the national feelings.

JOURNAL OF THE CITY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE.

On a former occasion,* we drew attention to the *Deseret News*, a journal published in the city of the Mormons west of the Rocky Mountains, and have already to record the somewhat curious fact, that notwithstanding all their wealth and refinement, these Latter-day Saints are unable to support a journal—the paper before us, October 16, 1852, being probably the penultimate of the series. The editor states, in a leading article addressed 'To the Saints,' that the paper is their own, the property of the Church; but that unless defaulters pay up, and new subscriptions are paid in advance, to enable him to purchase more paper and ink, 'Deseret must be minus its *News*,' after the publication of another number. While compassionating the difficulties of our brother of the very Far West, we are desirous of making hay while the sun shines, and giving a few traits of Mormon life before the source of the materials is quite dried up.

It is really a curious study this Mormon newspaper—perhaps the most curious in existence. It is the record of the daily life of a hermit city, built in the far wilds of the new world, surrounded by wild beasts and wild Indians, and at least 1000 miles from any other congregation of civilised men. Here are the Saints set down—for so they term themselves—rich in the comforts, luxuries, and many of the elegances of the world, and abundantly inclined to the enjoyment of these good things—buying, selling, fiddling, dancing, *not* paying for their newspaper—yet withal a community of monks and nuns (except as regards the ordinance of marriage), their city a vast convent, their government ecclesiastical, and their public business, religion. The newspaper presents an epitome of all this. It begins with some bad American jokes; then follow some elegant verses by Mrs Sigourney; and then a portion of the autobiography of Joseph Smith the prophet, in which he speaks thus of a namesake:—'Brother George A. Smith arose, and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighbourhood came running together—hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple—and were astonished at what was transpiring.'

After this autobiography, we have the parliamentary report, as it would be called in this country, although in Great Salt Lake City it is the 'minutes' of the general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, held in the Tabernacle, commencing October 6, 1852. There were present the presidents, the patriarchs, the twelve apostles, the seventies, the president of the stake, the high-priest's quorum, the presiding bishop, the clerk, and the reporter. The first and second speakers referred to the prophecies touching the Mormon Church, their fulfilment in the government and organization of the Latter-day Saints. The third talked of miracles, and of their Church being the great standing miracle to the rest of mankind. The president invited the Saints to the fast-day, and desired the bishops, 'if

* See No. 387, article, 'Journalism beyond the Rocky Mountains.'

there were any poor, to hunt them up and feed them; and if there were not any, to keep the food for another occasion.' This, diversified with prayers and hymns, formed one sedurant. At the next, it was discovered by an orator, that the reason the devil is mad about the Latter-day Saints is, that 'they will enjoy themselves.' 'He asked the question, What in the name of common-sense do any of the people let their cattle and pigs run loose for?—and remarked, that he is not a righteous man, or a Latter-day Saint, who will do so! for those persons who turn their cattle or pigs loose, do so that they may be fed on their neighbours' squash and gardens, in a dishonest manner; while there are 10,000 Saints come in this fall, who have likewise to be fed, and how will they be so, if we suffer all our garden-sauce and grain to be destroyed?' Some business was then adverted to by the president respecting the building of a Temple next year, and the removal of a portion of the people to the other valleys of the territory. 'The next thing I have noted,' said he, 'may perhaps be to some a novelty. What was said here last Sabbath by Brother Call and others, gives rise to this text, which I put forth for the brethren to preach upon. It is for the idlers and loafers to build me a good house. These men complain about me living on the tithing; but the truth is, I have never asked for one bushel of wheat, a single load of wood, or for the Church to build me a house. If any complain about the first presidency living on tithing, I want these men to build me a fine commodious house, worth about 25,000 dollars.' He then impressed upon his hearers the duty of care in worldly matters, as a thing contributing to the advancement of God's kingdom upon the earth. Another followed still more cogently in the same strain. 'He exhorted the Saints to sell their clothing to the farmers for wheat, so as to keep away from the merchants, and decorate your palaces with home-manufactures; and if you cannot get cotton-yarn to weave carpets, braid the rags, and adorn your palaces with rag carpets. I say unto you all, practise virtue, prudence, economy; be saving, and be industrious, and you will be blest.' This, in fact, is the standing 'text' of the Conferences. Much was said about the breeding of sheep, the manufacture of iron, and the duty of the Saints to abstain from dealing with the Gentile merchants, and spend their money with one another. The duty of attending to the creature-comforts was likewise a staple subject. To prolong our lives, is to prolong the works of the Father. Man, being the author of his own happiness or misery, should create circumstances to make him happy. With such views, emigration to the other valleys is recommended, and tempting pictures drawn of its advantages.

Among the 'accidents' of the paper, is an account of the loss of a child, who had suddenly disappeared, and had not been since seen or heard of; 'although his tracks were discovered in the bed of the dry creek, not far from the house, the same afternoon, and his whip or stick that he had been playing with, a little below, in the creek bottom, where it is supposed the child fell from a plank which was lying across the bed of the creek. The Indians had some time previous taken a fancy to the child, and offered to buy him for berries; and it has been reported, that Indians have been in the mountains near the place, killing bear.' To one of the marriages of the Saints is appended this characteristic note: 'The cake was sublime, and the wine exhilarating.' A tannery company 'tender their thanks to their friends who have patronised them by bringing them bark, oils, lumber, and the comforts of life, to assist in starting their business, and particularly to those who have thrown the mantle of charity over the products of the infant tannery—they will be remembered.' They are 'prepared, as usual, to receive your hides, skins, sumach, squaw-bush, oak-shrubs, as also your oils and tallow, for which we will pay you on

delivery. We wish you to call and see our progress in home-manufacture, and bring us some flour, meal, beef, pork, mutton, butter, cheese, potatoes, and other comforts, such as cloths of all kinds, socks, &c. We will trade our boots and shoes for anything that is useful for our comfort. We wish to establish a business independent of cash, if possible.' A tailor and renovator advertises that 'public hands can have their clothes cleaned for Church orders.' This may be a little mysterious; but there is no mistaking the following announcement to the city of the Saints:—'Sword and lance exercise will be taught by Thomas Hodgkinson, free of charge, on the Temple Block, at twelve o'clock; commencing on the first Saturday in November 1852; and at Big Cotton Wood, on the first Monday in the same month.' Several pastry-cooks advertise that their dainties are as nice as could be had in London. A company of daguerreotypers challenge the world to produce more artistic, more durable, or more correct lifelike likenesses. These will be taken at low prices, from three and a half dollars upwards, in cash, cattle, wheat, flour, adobies, butter, &c. 'All pictures warranted to please, or no charge.' Here is an advertising dodge, warranted as good as an English one:—'More gold! I will say to the people of Utah Territory, that pure lumps of gold have been lately discovered at my tannery, in the nineteenth ward of the G. S. L. City, and that I am sole proprietor of the diggings. Therefore, if you wish to participate in the precious evil, bring on your beef-hides and your tan-bark.' A saddle-maker is in want of hides:—'Stop that horse that has no saddle on! The subscriber is obliged to discontinue his business at saddle-tree making for want of hides to cover them with. Those wishing saddles must furnish some hides. He will give one saddle-tree for three good beef-hides, well saved, delivered at Ames' Tannery.' Here is a curious combination of trades:—'The subscriber takes this method to inform his customers and friends, that he has opened, in connection with his barber-shop, an eating-house, where he will endeavour to accommodate his patrons in the best possible manner with every variety of refreshments the Valley can afford.'

After the parliamentary report, there comes a more interesting one on the general condition of Great Salt Lake Valley, addressed to the Saints scattered throughout the earth. Notwithstanding various severe changes of weather, the season, it appears, was propitious. Grain and vegetables were abundant, and peaches and grapes of excellent quality. The outbreaks of the Indians had diminished, and they were learning to raise grain for themselves. 'The chiefs and braves of the Utes, and Shoshone or Snake Indians, which tribes have long been at variance, met in this city, 4th September, and formed a treaty of peace, perpetual peace, "good peace," as they say, in presence of the governor and Indian agent; and the present appearance is an indication of peace among the Indians generally in this region.' Considerable improvements had been made in tanning leather, manufacturing iron, pottery, &c.; although labour was scarce, most of the hands being occupied in raising grain for the bodies of emigrants passing that way towards California, and for the expected immigration of 10,000 Saints. Iron-mining was advancing; coal had been discovered; likewise an extensive bed of sulphur; and stone and marble of excellent quality. 'The Saints in the valley are feeling well, doing well, rejoicing in God, diligent in business, prospering abundantly in every lawful undertaking, and growing more faithful in keeping the commandments of God, paying their tithing, and building up the kingdom every year.' The number of inhabitants is already above 30,000. 'The Book of Mormon is now in print in the English, Welsh, French, German, Danish, and Italian languages; and preparations are making to translate and publish it in Chinese, Burmese, Spanish, and other languages.' The report notifies, under date

3d August, that 'Bishop Abraham O. Smoot arrived with thirty-one wagons, and about 250 Saints, the first company who have emigrated from England by means of the "Perpetual Emigrating Fund;" and their arrival was hailed with the greatest demonstrations of joy by the Saints in the Valley, and met with a hearty response by the camp.' The paper concludes with a pressing invitation to the Saints in all the corners of the earth, parodying Scripture in a manner that would be ludicrous, if it was not shocking; but adding immediately—'We want paints, oil, glass, putty, nails, house-trimmings, seeds for hedges and all choice fruits, vegetables, and flowers; cotton and wool machinery, and all kinds of labour-saving machinery. There are three more carding-machines wanted in the Valley next season. Sheep and young stock will find a good market to any amount. Fifty tons of cotton-yarn are wanted at the present moment for family use. Who will bring these things? All the Saints!'

After this farrago, it would be superfluous to dwell upon the causes of the success of Mormonism, which really appears to be insinuating itself, to some small extent, into many of the countries of Europe, as well as into the American states. It is obvious that there is no principle of vitality in the original imposture or delusion in itself; but this is, at least for the present, bolstered up by circumstances which conduce powerfully to the success of communities of men. The Saints are none of your lazy saints, who look to Providence for support without using the means themselves; neither are they of the lugubrious order of saints, who consider the rational enjoyment of their worldly inheritance a sin, and fancy themselves acceptable to the Donor when they receive his good gifts with a sour and dissatisfied countenance. Favoured by the scope for enterprise which a large, fertile, and unoccupied country presents, we can see reasons for Mormonism acquiring popularity in Western America, where its very absurdities, addressing the appetites and feelings of uninstructed masses of men, render it particularly acceptable. How far the superstition may attain a permanence, no one at present can take upon himself to say. Meanwhile, its rapid growth and establishment is one of the most marvellous events of our time. A new religion springing into active existence in the middle of the nineteenth century! What a practical comment on the so-called intelligence of the age!

A PLAY IN OLD ATHENS.

COURTEOUS reader, let that courtesy for which you are notorious the wide world over, be extended upward, while we escort you, in spirit and not in letter, to a theatrical performance by actors that have been dead, and on a stage that hath vanished away, long ago.

For us and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

What we propose doing, is to go back to Athens as it stood in classic dignity two thousand three hundred years ago, and conduct you in spirit to one of the famous plays of the immortal Sophocles. We can assure you the thing is worth seeing—better, indeed, than the swaggering nonsense which has lately usurped the place of the true old drama.

Let us suppose ourselves a comfortable family-party—as comfortable as such behind-hand circumstances permit, in a day whose philosophy has not yet dreamed of gas, and omnibuses, and steam-carriages, and letter-press, and other developments of the 'process of the suns.' We are booked for a place, in common with all Athens; and no doubt all true citizens will join us—the theatre affording 'ample room and verge enough,' by its prodigious dimensions, and the said citizens being desperate men about town

and inveterate play-goers. Ten or a dozen Drury Lane or Covent-Garden theatres thrown into one—or rather, public accommodation to that amount—will give a notion of the capabilities of the place.

We are not too soon, you see; for they are crowding and jostling at the entrances, eager to secure good seats. There has been a multitude waiting there, for that purpose, ever since daybreak. Years ago, the strife for places was so hot, and waxed so fast and furious, that magisterial interference became necessary; and admission, which had hitherto been free, was now subjected to payment. The rate was fixed high enough to exclude, in effect, the poorer citizens; and murmurs loud and deep ensued—too loud not to be heard, too deep to be trifled with by those in authority. Accordingly, our wise and popular Pericles—we shall see him probably at the play this morning—has reduced the entrance-fee to a mere nothing; and even that mere nothing may be had for the asking, by simply making application to a certain public functionary provided with funds on purpose.

The huge structure which we are entering is, you will observe, roofless. What need of a roof in the sunny South, among a manly people, and where the performance is by broad daylight? But what if a shower comes on? Why, wait till it's over, and then go on again, as if nothing had happened, or at worst only a refreshing interlude. Now, then, for a seat; scramble amid the strugglers, every one for himself. This will do, though it is, as you object, about half a mile from the stage. But can we see anything at such a distance? *Nous verrons*—that is to say, we shall. And as for hearing, scarcely a syllable will escape us, in spite of the thousands of heads between us and the orchestra."

The stage extends from one end of the building to the other, a narrow strip, the centre of which is the station for the *dramatis personee*. It is of the same height as the lowest bench in what we should call the pit (unless the orchestra, which occupies the space between the audience and stage, better corresponds with that section), and the semicircular benches rise in such proportion to their distance from the stage, that almost all can see with equal facility. Flights of stairs branch off from the orchestra, and rise to the corridor at the summit of the house—the 'gallery,' to which the 'gods' are consigned in British mythology. The orchestra is not a 'local habitation and a name,' for fiddling and trumpeting operations; its denizens are not professors of the trombone and fife, bassoon and ophicleide, triangle and big-drum, viola and violoncello, led by a neat-handed savant in the concord of sweet sounds: it is the *locale* consecrated to the Chorus; a corporation of infinite importance in the Greek theatre, composed, as the Athenian population is, of what the tea-gardens call 'votaries of Terpsichore,' and whose movements on the light fantastic toe are watched with consummate interest by universal Athens. This orchestra, then, is a 'smooth level space, large and wide enough for the unrestrained movements of a numerous band of dancers;' in the middle stands the *thymele*, a sort of raised platform, which serves as resting-place for the chorus, when there is a temporary cessation from the 'hop.' The form of the stage, which, as we have seen, is remarkably long, but very narrow withal, accords with the Greek taste for long lines of figures, seldom grouped so as to lose their individual distinctness. The stage is enclosed on three sides by high walls, the hinder one being called the scene (whence the stage itself is called the *pro-scenium*), and this scene is adorned with various architectural and other decorations. Something corresponding to a trap-door system is to be found in a certain flight of steps, 'fixed somewhere under the seats of the spectators, and called Charon's Staircase, by which,

unobserved by the audience, the shades of the departed ascend into the orchestra, and there mount the stage.* When the interior of a house or apartment is to be seen, a machine is made use of, the *encyclopa* by name—a covered semicircular structure, open in front. Other machinery is not wanting, such as contrivances for storm and shower, thunder and lightning, earthquake and conflagration; ropes for supporting gods and heroes, while sounding on their dim and perilous way between the heavens and the earth, in the manner approved of Easter extravaganzas and Christmas pantomimes; platforms, too, and winged chariots, and grim productions of the 'property' man, such as hippogriffs, and similar 'strange fowl,' upon whose back it is the rôle of adventurous performers now and then to come careering through space. The scenery itself is so arranged, that the principal object, to which we are supposed to be nearest, is placed at the background, sometimes painted, sometimes the actual object itself; while distant prospects occupy the two wings. The necessary changes of scene are effected by shifting the position of these latter, which, being triangular prisms, turning round on an axis fastened beneath, present three different surfaces for successive exhibition, according to the exigencies of the piece.

We are come, say, to witness the *Ajax* of Sophocles. What the two or three other dramas may be which make up the complement to be performed during this day and to-morrow (for the custom holds to enact a trilogy, or trial of plays kindred in subject, followed by a so-called satyric drama), deponent, for very fair reasons, saith not. The men of Athens are not tired of three or four tragedies, all committed between Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon: for our part, and as present occasion serves, one will suffice; and of that only a flying notice. When this prodigious audience adjourns at the close of No. I. in the programme, to recruit themselves against the speedy advent of No. II., by indulgence in wine and 'sweeties,' we can take the opportunity of retiring to put our notes into shape, without troubling the janitor for a return-ticket.

The signal for action given, the play begins. Jove-born Pallas advances, in confidential parley with her wily, wary, 'pawky' protégé, Ulysses; the scene being a field near the tent of Ajax, who has just been disappointed in his pretensions to the arms of Achilles, and has, in consequence, taken frantic measures of revenge against his compatriots. These measures have been overruled by Pallas, who has directed the maddened chieftain's bloody wrath against the cattle and sheep, instead of their human owners.

Turning his rage against the mingled flocks,
 . . . on these with violence
 He rushed, and slaughtered many; now he thought
 That he had slain the Atridae, now believed
 Some other chiefs had perished by his hand.
 I [Pallas *loquitur*] saw his frenzy, and still urged him on,
 That he might fall into the snare I laid;
 Tired with his slaughter, now he binds in chains
 The living victim, drives the captive herd
 Home to his tent, nor doubts that they are men,
 And there assails them with unnumbered stripes.

To convince Ulysses of the degradation of Ajax, Pallas-Athenè then summons the latter to bring his huge body into court—not a little to the alarm, however, of her cautious pupil, who, shaking in his shoes the while, 'begs off,' and clamorously prays to be excused. The goddess removes his craven apprehensions, by making him invisible to the wholesale 'flesher,' who makes his appearance, and exults in the extent of his supposed slaughter—especially chuckling at having 'that fox accursed,' Ulysses, included among his takings. Then

we have the chorus, composed of the followers of Ajax, who lament, in lyric strains of woe, the humiliating position of their unhappily blinded leader. Anon his wife, Tecmessa, enters, and narrates in detail, to the sympathising chorus, the history of the massacre. This narration is followed by the discovery of Ajax sitting alone in his tent, just recovered from his delirium, and overwhelmed with agonising horror at his condition, past and present. He calls on the chorus to put an end to his misery, and makes testamentary arrangements for the care of his child Eurysaces. Meanwhile, his brother Teucer is speeding from 'Mysia's rocky mountains,' to aid and avenge him—despatching an order to guard Ajax carefully within his tent. But the order comes too late. Ajax has already escaped the vigilance of his friends, and sought repose in death. Too late arrive, in scattered companies, the anxious clansmen and choristers, in search of the dead hero. His corpse is discovered by Tecmessa, and Teucer's advent avails only to wring from the reluctant Atridae a permission to honour it with wonted rites of sepulture—in the final attainment of which, it is fair to add, he is serviceably backed by Ulysses.

So runs the play. And now, how comes it, you may ask, that we, at such a disadvantage for seeing and hearing, have contrived to see and hear at all? As to the seeing, it must be owned that, except for artificial aids and appliances, the actors would be almost indistinguishable in form and feature. But, in the first place, their stature is heightened portentously by what Hamlet calls 'the altitude of a chioppine'—in other words, by the buskin, or cothurnus, or high shoe; and, secondly, their faces are covered with prodigious masks, on the artistic impressiveness of which, the utmost skill is expended, and which comprise an almost incredible variety of expression, always, however, subject to the laws of severe classical taste. The necessary unity of expression in any one mask, is not displeasing to the ideal tragedy of Greece—wherein the *dramatis persone*, once imbued with certain overmastering passions, once possessed by certain capital emotions, are expected to continue, throughout the drama, faithful representatives of the law of their character, constant to and consistent with the principle or the feeling they embody. And where an exception may seem called for—as in this case of Ajax, who first has the aspect of excited triumph and then that of despairing shame—it is allowable to change the mask between the acts.

Must not the voice suffer, again, by this artificial head-piece? That objection is provided for by an acoustic contrivance appended to the mask—besides which, a voice of remarkable natural power, strengthened and developed by systematic training and exercise, is of itself a *sine qua non* demanded of every candidate for tragic laurels. It is part of the duty of the choragus, moreover—the acting manager responsible to the state—to provide for the chorus such, and only such ment and drink as medical science approves for strengthening and improving the voice.*

We betide the choragus, the chorus, the actors, if they discharge their functions carelessly! Athens is impatient of bad acting, and will on no account tolerate a blunder in the *mise en scène*, or a hitch in the performance. A blundering tragedian is soon warned off the premises. Is he ungraceful?—Jeers and gibes come pelting in pitiless showers. Does his pathos overreach correct taste? or his passion approximate to rant? or his independence disdain to bring out the traditional points of his part?—He is perhaps assailed with missiles, whatever comes first to hand, is compelled to doff his mask and expose his face to his despotic critics, and is then driven with all contumely from the stage, while a herald summons another actor to take his

* Schlegel's *Dram. Lit.*

* Back's *Public Economy of Athens*.

place, and a fine is imposed on this intended substitute if he is not prepared for immediate compliance. It is right to add, that when the sovereign people are, on the other hand, pleased with the acting, they are just as hearty and demonstrative in their applause. And a first-rate actor certainly gets first-rate pay; * not Jenny Lind, nor Tagliani, nor Sontag, ever got better.

Before the time of Sophocles, no more than two actors took part in the drama. He has added a third. The now legitimate number is three, though any number of *dummies* is allowed. The chorus consists of fifteen, and a more attractive body of men you will not find in universal Hellas—thanks to their musical and dancing skill, their costly attire, and the glorious bursts of lyrical poetry of which they are the mouthpiece. Change of metre is used to express a change in the thoughts and emotions of the chorus, who represent the ideal spectator, and whose mode of viewing the action of the piece is meant to guide and control the impressions of the audience at large.

But it is time for us, having seen our sight, to have said our say. Enough for our brief purpose—a broken cadence, as it were, from the ruins of Athens.

PEARLS AND PEARL-FISHERS IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

THE pearl, as every one knows, is a natural growth in the interior of certain bivalve molluscs, found in almost every region of the world, from Norway to the Strait of Magellan, and from China to California and Peru. Even Britain can boast of her pearls at this day, as the Crystal Palace could witness, for it contained two beautiful specimens—one Scotch, the other Irish. It is not a century since they were fished in Loch Tay; and since then, L.10,000 worth were sent from Perth to London in the course of three years—1761-64—and sold from 10s. to 36s. the ounce. Several rivers in England, Wales, and Ireland produce them, but in small quantities, and of inferior quality. In some of the continental rivers they exist, and form an article of traffic. The principal seats of the pearl-fishery in the New World are, the Gulfs of California, Mexico, and Panama; some of the West India islands, and the Strait of Magellan. In the Old World, the most celebrated are in Ceylon, on the coasts of India, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Most of them have been famous from the earliest ages. Even in the days of Job, pearls are enumerated among the articles of priceless value—the ruby, the sapphire, the precious onyx, and the gold of Ophir. Doubtless, these were the products of the Indian and Arabian seas. In several of the above localities, the taking of the pearl-oyster has declined, and nearly disappeared, either from the beds having been exhausted, or the trade neglected.

The most flourishing grounds are the islands in the Persian Gulf, which continue to maintain their ancient celebrity. Of these fisheries we propose to give a short account, as we find them described by recent travellers who have visited the spot, and collected statistical information on the subject.

Judging from Pliny's account, and excepting only the fabulous credulity of that age with regard to the breeding and habits of the pearl-oyster, the mode of fishing practised now differs but little from what it was 2000 years ago. The chief places where the trade is carried on are, the Bahrein Islands, and other groups lying along the extensive bank which girds the greater portion of the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. The depth of the water, in general, varies from five to fifteen fathoms, though coral-reefs occasionally rear themselves nearly on a level with the surface. The right of fishing is common to all the Gulf; but those who engage most extensively in the trade, are the inhabitants

of the pirate coast, and the islanders of Bahrein. A dispute might arise about rights and privileges similar to that between the Yankees and British North American colonists, but custom has assigned to both parties in the Gulf certain prescribed limits. The Bahrein fishermen prosecute their labours between that island and the port of El Katyf, while the other boats seldom proceed beyond Halool, or a little to the northward. Upwards of 3000 boats are employed during the season, about one-half of them belonging to the Bahrein islanders, and they have a considerable advantage over the others; for, being in the vicinity of their own port, they return, when laden, for the purpose of opening their oysters, while those from the pirate coast proceed for a like purpose to the several islands with which the lower part of the coast is studded. It is a very beautiful sight to witness these tiny fleets all busily and briskly engaged, especially when the weather is favourable, calm, and clear, which keeps the water free from agitation.

Major Wilson, who resided at Bushire, and has furnished many details of the pearl-trade, says that, 'the fishing season is divided into two portions: the one, called the short or cold; the other, the long and hot. What is called the short and cold fishery is common everywhere. In the cooler weather of the month of June, diving is practised along the coast in shallow water; and it is not until the intensely hot months of July, August, and half of September, that the Bahrein banks are much frequented. The water on them is deeper—about seven fathoms—and the divers are much inconvenienced when that element is cold—indeed, they can do little when it is not as warm as the air; and it frequently becomes even more so in the hottest months of the summer, above mentioned.' Generally, the fishermen are poor, the trade being in the hands of merchants, some of whom possess considerable capital. The capitalist advances money often at the exorbitant interest of cent. per cent., and a portion of dates, rice, and other necessary articles for the men; he also lets a boat to them, for which he gets one share of the gross profits of all that is fished; and finally, he purchases the pearls nearly at his own price. The following may be reckoned the common mode of proceeding:—Five *ghowass*, or divers, and five *syebor*, or pullers-up, agree to take a boat together; the capitalist lends the funds necessary to support them and their families during the season, and they are bound to replace the money, whether fortunate in their adventure or not. If they get a large draught of valuable oysters, they may become rich and independent; if they do not succeed, they are plunged into debt, and left at the mercy of the rapacious capitalist; and often it happens that the men who make the most fearful exertions in diving, can hardly get food to eat. The method of fishing is thus described by Major Wilson:—'When a boat arrives at a spot, considered from the nature of the bottom as likely to prove favourable, the boat is anchored, and the crew divided into two portions: one remains in the boat, to receive the oysters, and haul up the divers; the others strip naked, and jump into the sea. A small basket, capable of holding from eight to ten oysters, is then handed to them, and suspended to their left arm; the nostrils are closed with a piece of elastic horn, the diver places his foot on a stone attached to a cord, inhales a long breath, and upon raising his right arm as a signal, the rope is immediately let go, and he sinks to the bottom. After collecting as many as are within his reach, he jerks the line, and is drawn at once to the surface. Forty seconds is the average, and one minute and thirty-five seconds the ultimatum which they can remain below. They now cling for a few minutes to ropes suspended for that purpose over the sides of the vessel, and renew their exertions until tired, when they exchange places with those in the boat; and so on alternately, until

* Polus received about L.200 for two days.

their cargo is completed. Unopened, the oysters are valued at two dollars the hundred; say upon an average they bring five to the surface, that would be at the rate of about a penny for each descent. Little enough for such a laborious and unhealthy employment, did they obtain the whole; but they are fortunate if, after the rapacious demands of their masters are satisfied, they get a third. No one receives any definite wages, but are paid in certain shares, dependent on their skill as divers, or other causes. Sharks they appear to hold in little dread, but the saw-fish was much feared, and instances were related to me of men who had been completely cut in two by these monsters. To protect themselves from the blubber which floats about in some places, and if it comes in contact with them, stings them very severely, they envelop themselves in white dresses, and have, when floating about in the water, with the sun glistening on them, a singular appearance.

There are several modes of opening the shell, but most commonly it is done with a clasp-knife; and the pearl is found imbedded in the muscular portion of the fish, where it is attached to the shell. The shells are also sometimes piled up on shore, where the heat of the sun decomposes the fish, and the pearls are at once obtained.

The sheiks levy a tax from three to five dollars on each boat, according to its size. The value of the whole produce of the season on the principal bank is estimated at forty lacs of dollars, or about L.80,000, of which it is computed the Hindoo merchants purchase and transmit two-thirds to India, while the remaining portion finds its way into Persia and Arabia. The boats are of various sizes, and of varied construction, averaging from ten to fifty tons. During one season, it is computed that the island of Bahrein furnishes of all sizes 3500, the Persian coast 100, and the space between Bahrein and the entrance of the Gulf, including the pirate coast, 700. The value of the pearls obtained at these several ports is estimated at between L.400,000 and L.600,000 annually. This, however, is rather an uncertain calculation. Some native merchants have stated it to be three or four times that amount, but a good deal seems to be matter of guess or opinion, and it is difficult to get any accurate statement. Even the smaller sum, however, is an enormous annual value, for an article found in other parts of the world as well as in the Persian Gulf, and which is never used in its best and purest state as anything else than an ornament. A considerable quantity of the seed-pearls is used throughout Asia in the composition of electuaries, to form which all kinds of precious stones are occasionally mixed, after being pounded, except, indeed, diamonds, which, from being so hard, are considered utterly indigestible. The electuary, in which there is a large quantity of pearls, is much sought for, and valued on account of its supposed stimulating and restorative qualities. These virtues, however, must be purely ideal, as we now know the substances of which the pearl is composed. What would Cleopatra have said had she been aware that her costly draught was a luxury only in the imagination little different from a glass of lime-water!

Diving is considered very detrimental to health, and without doubt it shortens the life of those who practise it much. But the natives, being familiar with the water from their youth, are very expert; and the time they will remain in it, as well as the distance they can swim, would sound incredible to European ears. There are well-attested cases of individuals who, without rest, have swum more than seven miles. Many exaggerated tales have been told respecting the extraordinary depth to which pearl-fishers and Arab divers will descend in pursuit of their arduous occupation. This is perhaps not so remarkable in the Gulf as in the Red Sea. Lieutenant Welsted, who had personal opportunities of judging of both, says of the Gulf fishers, that their

divers rarely descend beyond eleven or twelve fathoms, and even then they always exhibited signs of great exhaustion. But in the Red Sea, the divers will go down twice that depth. One of the most noted performers of this exploit was the famous pilot, old Seroor, well known to all navigators of the Arabian seas, and often mentioned by travellers. Lieutenant Welsted states, that he has seen him dive repeatedly to twenty-five fathoms, without betraying the slightest symptoms of inconvenience. He mentions also the following facts, which happened some few years since:—“A vessel had sunk amid the outer shoals of Jiddah in nineteen fathoms, and the old man visited her for several successive days, remaining each time long enough under water to saw off the copper bolts which projected from her timbers. He also spent much time “within the bowels of the vasty deep,” diving for the black coral or *goosser*, a species of zoophyte found near Jiddah, Yembo, and other places in their vicinity. All his sons are equally expert as swimmers and divers. I have repeatedly seen them remain floating on the surface of the waves, watching for the descent of a rupee, which some one on board was preparing to toss over, and which they never failed to catch long before it reached the bottom. During warm weather—for here, as in the Persian Gulf, the Arabs do not admire cold water—the young divers may be frequently observed undergoing a regular course of training in their art, which they persevere in till the blood gushes from their eyes, ears, and noses. A still severer trial must be endured before they are considered adepts, which does not happen till the drum of the ear is actually ruptured. One of these amphibious youngsters, scarcely thirteen years of age, would sink to the depth of twenty-five fathoms. Old Seroor, the father, has frequently dived in thirty fathoms, and once offered, for a heavy wager, to bring up mud from the bottom at thirty-five. I have been credibly informed, he has actually accomplished this latter feat, though the former is the greatest depth to which I have ever seen him descend; and even there, how immense must be the pressure of the fluid by which he was surrounded!

“The only assistance he makes use of consists of a stone fastened to a rope; on the former, he places his foot, and the latter, when he is ready, is “payed down” as fast as possible after him. A tug on this, when his object was accomplished, formed the signal for hauling him again to the surface. Neither father nor sons appeared to stand much in dread of the sharks, though the old man bore on his arm the scar of a large wound which he had received in a desperate conflict with one of these monsters. Accidents of that kind seldom happen; and it would appear that there is some truth in the notion of the Arabs, that owing to the dingy colour of their skins, sharks rarely attack a native; while the whiteness of a European usually proves an irresistible bait to their epicurean palates.”

In the Persian Gulf, Lieutenant Welsted witnessed another instance of the singular feats performed by the divers. He says: “In 1827, we were cruising in the Honourable Company's sloop *Ternate* on the pearl banks. Whilst becalmed, and drifting slowly along with the current, several of the officers and men were looking over her side at our Arab pilot, who had been amusing himself in diving for oysters. After several attempts, his search proved unsuccessful. “I will now,” said he, “since I cannot gather oysters, dive for and catch fish.” All ridiculed the idea. He went down again, and great was our astonishment to see him, after a short time, rise to the surface with a small rock-fish in each hand. His own explanation of the feat was, that as he seated himself at the bottom, the fish came around and nibbled at his skin. Watching an opportunity, he seized and secured his prey by thrusting his thumb and forefinger into their expanded gills.”

With regard to the time during which the divers can remain under water, there are different statements; but, generally, the period has been much overrated. Some writers have asserted, that they have known instances of divers who could continue four or five minutes. Mr Morier says, that the Bahrein fishers remain so long under water as five minutes; but this appears to be exaggerated, for Lieutenant Welsted states one minute as the average time; and he says he never knew them but on one occasion to exceed a minute and a half. The exploit was performed in presence of the British resident, Colonel Stannus; and for a reward of a few dollars, only one man of some hundreds remained down a minute and fifty seconds. In Ceylon, the divers rarely exceed fifty seconds. The exertions the fishermen undergo have the effect of shortening their days; few of them live to a great age. Their eyes become very weak and bloodshot, and their bodies break out in blotches and ulcers. Their chief danger, however, arises from sharks and saw-fishes; the latter is by far the most formidable enemy they have to encounter, and in the Persian Gulf, these monsters attain a larger size than perhaps in any other region of the world: they are of an oblong, rounded form, the head being somewhat flattened from the fore-part, and tapering more abruptly towards the tail. They usually measure from thirteen to fifteen feet in length, being covered with a coriaceous skin, of a dark colour above, but white beneath the body. The terrific weapon from whence they derive their name, is a flat projecting snout, resembling a long blade, six feet in length, and four inches in breadth, armed on each side with sharp spines, having the appearance of a large toothed saw.

The pearl-trade in the Gulf is of two kinds—either when they are bought up by the capitalist, who advances the money for the outfit, or when purchased on speculation. In the former case, the produce is forestalled, generally for a foreign market, before it is actually acquired. On the other hand, individuals who are not merchants are always made to pay very dearly for the liberty of selecting articles of the first quality, as by taking these away, the general mercantile value is diminished, and wholesale dealers will not consent to reduce the marketable worth of their goods without a considerable profit. This may account for more being demanded from persons making selections of fine pearls on the spot, than they probably could be bought for in London.

The value of pearls depends entirely upon the quality. They do not now bring that 'great price' mentioned in Scripture and in Roman history. Julius Cesar would have some difficulty in finding one such as he presented to Servilia, the mother of Marcus Brutus, which was said to be worth L.48,417, 10s. The most costly article of this kind, in modern times, is that which was purchased by Tavernier at El Katyf, near Bahrein, and is now in the possession of the king of Persia, which was estimated at L.110,000. The Spanish crown had one pearl which was valued at somewhat more than L.30,000: it was obtained by Philip II., in 1587, from the island of Margarita, off the Colombian coast. Indifferent and bad pearls are abundant and cheap in the Eastern markets, and they are used in great profusion for embroidering the dresses of both men and women in Persia. A blue velvet upper garment, tastefully adorned with pearls, has a magnificent appearance. Respecting the larger and more valuable ones, Major Wilson observes, that what would pass current among Oriental nations as good, and suitably arranged in regard to shape, size, and water, would be rejected in Europe as intolerably mixed, and utterly ill assorted. There is the same difference in estimating the water and flaws in stones and jewels; but this want of precision and indistinctness of perception is more apparent among Asiatics in general than Europeans.

When the oysters are brought on shore, before being opened they are frequently sold as a gambling adventure. The largest shells are preserved; many are from six to nine inches in diameter, and are valuable on account of the mother-of-pearl with which they are lined. The oyster itself is never eaten, even in a country where food is so scarce.

More frequently, however, the oysters are opened at sea, in some of the islands with which the bank is studded, and to which the fishermen repair when they have filled their boats. Having constructed tents with their masts, oars, and sails, they proceed with the operation. On these occasions, quarrels and disputes often occur between rival boats or tribes. In order to check such outbreaks, which, if permitted to go on, would lead to general confusion, two government vessels belonging to the Indian navy are now kept cruising in the Gulf, off the bank. Of the various duties assigned to our war-vessels abroad, this is confessed to be by far the most harassing and unpleasant. It is admitted by those who are well qualified to judge, that the heat of the atmosphere in the Persian Gulf during the warm season is not surpassed by any other spot in the known world. The nights being short, neither earth nor sea has time to cool. Even when on the horizon, the sun is sufficiently warm to be disagreeable; the sailors say it rises red-hot; and a few minutes afterwards, the intensity of its beams elevates Fahrenheit's thermometer 10 degrees. From this period, until about eleven in the forenoon, when the sea-breeze sets in, the heat is almost intolerable. Under double awnings, their heads not unfrequently bound with wet cloths, the seamen are seen lying on the deck, or stretched along the gunwale, looking for the first welcome indication of the breeze, and absolutely panting for breath. Without the smallest exertion, a copious perspiration streams from every pore. Water increases, instead of allaying thirst; the skin is in such a state from irritation, that no clothes can be endured; and the slightest movement, by causing it to crack, is accompanied with great pain. Such is the account of these intolerable and painful exposures given by Lieutenant Welsted, who himself experienced them when engaged on the British survey of the Persian Gulf some years ago. The effects of this surveillance, however, have been very beneficial in preserving peace and preventing quarrels among the fishers. Petty squabbles between the boats of competing tribes still occur occasionally, but nearly the whole of their vessels now fish and trade harmoniously in the Gulf from port to port, and from thence to India and the Red Sea. It may, indeed, be questioned whether, from the earliest period when commerce first dawned, and navigation made its infant efforts in the hands of the Phœnicians, an equal protection has been afforded in that part of the Indian Ocean to the fisherman and the merchant trading upon its coasts.

Having now given some account of the pearl-divers and their different operations, it may not be uninteresting to describe briefly the principal locality where the fisheries are carried on. This can now be more easily done, from the elaborate survey instituted not many years ago by the East India Company. Until 1764, we had no chart of the Persian Gulf. Niebuhr was probably among the first Europeans who traversed its waters. Benjamin of Tudela, in 1292, speaks of it; but it was not until the illustrious Niebuhr visited it, that we possessed a chart. The extraordinary accuracy of that remarkable man is as conspicuous in this, as it is in the several other branches of human knowledge to which he turned his attention during his stay in the East. Since his time, more perfect maps and memoirs have been furnished us of these interesting regions, by various learned hydrographers, at the expense of the East India government. The most celebrated of the pearl islands is Bahrein, already mentioned, which

presents 'the greenest spot' in Oman's green sea.' Repeated mention is made of it by the earliest geographers. It is the Tiara of Ptolemy (hence the name of a jewelled crown), and the Icharia of Strabo; and it was selected as a harbour by the Portuguese when they possessed themselves of stations in the Gulf. The population of Bahrein was reckoned, a few years ago, at about 40,000. The principal town, called Manama, is situated at the northern extremity of the island, which measures twenty-seven and a half miles long, and ten broad. The houses are well built, and the town, altogether, is more respectable than any other in the Persian Gulf. The market is abundantly supplied with fine cattle, sheep, poultry, fish, and vegetables. The inhabitants carry on an extensive trade with all the tribes along the coast; but the chief source of their employment and subsistence is the pearl-fishery. The island possesses a fertile soil, is watered by numerous rills, and is capable of the highest cultivation. The interior is occupied by a range of hills; but the shores are very low, and surrounded with shoals, most of which are dry at ebb-water. The fields are covered with plantations of date-trees; and there are various springs of excellent water, but none of them near enough the harbour to be available for shipping. There is a curious phenomenon, which has been noticed by travellers, and is of some importance to navigators. In the vicinity of Bahrein, fresh water is found beneath the salt, eighteen feet below the surface, and rising from the bottom of the sea. This water the inhabitants use for household purposes; and when ships and boats visit the island, they are generally supplied with it. The mode of obtaining the water is simple, and characteristic of the people: a diver descends with an empty skin, places its mouth over the spot whence the fresh spring gushes, ties the string when it is filled, and allows the leathern cask to rise to the surface of its own accord. This singular provision of nature deserves to be known, for there is little doubt that, if search were carefully made in places where fresh water is scarce, springs of a similar kind would be found in other parts of the world.

CARVING OF POULTRY.

In Mr Soyer's *Modern Housewife*, a clever and handy work on cookery, will at length be found a solution of that formidable problem—how to carve a fowl with elegance and ease. Soyer explains the marvel in a way which no one could previously have the slightest idea of; and which, in fact, is nothing else than a piece of legerdemain. Well, the way, he says, to carve a fowl neatly is, to have nothing to carve—for it really comes to that. Yes, a fowl lies before you at table, to all appearance requiring to be anatomised by the usual desperate process, at least in all but first-rate hands, of wrenching the joints and bones asunder; but, lo! the thing is done by a mere touch of the knife. Legs, wings, breastbones, instead of flying about in all directions, drop becomingly into the dish. If this be not a discovery, we do not know what is. But how is it all managed? Here comes the secret: the fowl has had all its joints cut by the cook before dressing, and that without disturbing the outer skin. To effect this properly, an instrument requires to be employed called a tendon separator, of which Soyer gives a drawing. Of course, every one who reads this will get one of these instruments, which we should think will not be more costly than an ordinary pair of scissors. The method of using the instrument, and of trussing for table, is explained in the useful manual referred to. We are told, that when roasted, the appearance of poultry is greatly improved by this simple operation—looking more plump on account of the sinews having lost their power of contraction.

SWEDISH SONGS.

THE FISHERMAN IN HIS BOAT.

EARLY at morning-tide seek I the strand,
Push off my fishing-boat far from the land:
Swings she so merrily over the bay,
Down to the island where bright fishes play.
Calm lies the wide bay, the sun shining o'er it,
Fair are the meadows and blue hills before it;
Row, row away! I row, row away!
In my light fishing-boat rocking all day.

Far towards the silent creek, where the bold sun
Peers through white birches and pine-trees so dim—
There go my eager thoughts—there my heart lies,
There upon Sundays my fishing-boat flies:
Gaily the tall reeds and wavelets are singing,
Gaily the aspen and alder are swinging,
Down by the shore—far down the sweet shore,
There dwells a little maid—mine evermore!

THE LITTLE COLLIER-BOY.

Father he works in the coal-pits deep,
Mother she sits at home spinning;
When I'm a big man, tall and strong,
I will their bread be winning.
I'll have a sweetheart true,
We'll have a cottage new,
Down in the dark wood where she sits spinning.
Father shall work in the open air,
Mother shall sit by the fireside,
Sewing on gowns she likes to wear,
With the little ones creeping up by'r side;
When I've a wife so true,
And we've a cottage new,
Down in the dark wood where she sat spinning.

EDEN-LAND.

You remember where in starlight
We two wandered hand in hand?
While the night-flowers poured their perfume
Forth like love o'er all the land:—
There I, walking yester-even,
Felt like a ghost from Eden-land!
I remember all you told me—
Looking up as we did stand,
While my heart poured out its perfume
Like the night-flowers in your hand,
And the path where we two wandered
Seemed not like earth, but Eden-land.
Now the stars shine paler, colder,
Night-flowers fade, without your hand:
Yet my spirit walks beside you
Everywhere, in every land:
And I wait till we shall wander
Under the stars of Eden-land.

CALIFORNIA INDUSTRY.

Owing to the spongy, springy nature of the soil in the burying-ground of San Francisco, many of the corpses there interred, instead of decaying, have been converted into a substance well known to chemists by the name of adipocere—a substance analogous to, and intermediate between, stearine and spermaceti. In passing the ground this morning to my place of employment, I saw a person busily engaged in collecting the adipocere from the exposed bodies. Struck by the singularity of his employment, I interrogated him as to its object, when he coolly replied, that he was gathering it to make soap!—*The Panama Herald*.

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by W. S. ORR, Amen Corner, London; D. N. CHAMBERS, 55 West Nile Street, Glasgow; and J. M'GLASHAN, 50 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.—Advertisements for Monthly Parts are requested to be sent to MAXWELL & Co., 31 Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street, London, to whom all applications respecting their insertion must be made.